

Julia Brownley NEWS

41st Assembly District



A MONTHLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER TO THE 41ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
(Including Agoura, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Encino, Hidden Hills, Lake Sherwood, Malibu, Oak Park, Pacific Palisades, Port Hueneme, South Oxnard, Santa Monica, Tarzana, Topanga, Westlake Village, and Woodland Hills)

APRIL 2007

Lobbying for Californians in Washington, D.C.

With California's state budget still in deficit, California's taxpayers continue to be major donors to the Federal government. For every tax dollar Californians send to Washington, D.C. we receive back only 79¢. The *Tax Foundation*, a nonpartisan, non-profit research organization that monitors tax policy, lists California's 79¢ as 43rd in the nation in Federal spending for each Federal dollar paid. New Mexico was ranked #1, receiving \$2.00 back for each \$1.00 paid. 32 of the 50 states received at least \$1.01 back or more.

This is unacceptable. California has enormous unmet needs, and it's time to end the picking of our taxpayers' pockets. I was honored to have been selected by Speaker Fabian Nuñez as one of a bipartisan group of Assemblymembers who traveled with him to Washington, D.C. last month to try and rectify this situation.



In particular, he asked me to be part of his education team, and to talk with our Congressional representatives about the challenges of educating the children of our growing state. These included the difficulties that the rigid "No Child Left Behind" Federal mandates have caused in trying to meet the individual needs of our very diverse school populations, as well as the failure of the Federal government to provide the promised funding. I met with the House Chair of their Education and Labor Committee, George Miller, as well as with Senator Edward Kennedy, a co-author of "No Child Left Behind."



I was able to schedule time to speak directly with Senators Boxer and Feinstein and with Congressman Waxman about District issues that will need Federal partnerships. And it was quite a surprise to meet President Bill Clinton and several of the 2008 Democratic presidential hopefuls at an evening reception.

Cabrillo Port LNG Applicant Suffers Major Blows from Two Critical State Agencies

Over the past several years, BHP Billiton, an Australian mega-corporation has been making plans to moor a massive floating liquefied natural gas platform offshore from Malibu and South Oxnard to regasify and pipe their LNG onshore via a sea floor pipeline. The environmental review was recently completed, and the summary of those conclusions was that 20 substantial Class I impacts were identified that cannot be mitigated to less than significant levels. These include explosive risks, generation of hundreds of tons of new air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions annually, and serious ocean impacts.

I was proud to join an energizing rally last month on the Malibu Pier in a show of great solidarity between the impacted residents of Malibu and South Oxnard. Actor Pierce Brosnan and his wife Keely, both strong environmental activists, were there to help bring attention to the serious risks of this application.



On Monday, April 9, the **State Lands Commission** met in Oxnard. I joined an overflow crowd of hundreds of concerned residents who testified, and expressed my very grave reservations about the danger of this untested facility. Following some blistering questioning of the applicant on multiple unanswered environmental concerns, State Lands commissioners John Garamendi and John Chiang rejected the request for the essential state license to run the pipeline through state waters from the platform. It was disappointing that the Governor's appointed commissioner dissented. The majority commissioners also refused to certify the Environmental Impact Report.

On Thursday, April 12, the **California Coastal Commission** met to determine whether the project was consistent with California's Coastal Management Program, which includes compliance with the Federal Clean Air Act. BHP Billiton made an unsuccessful procedural play to stop the proceedings entirely, refusing to testify or to answer questions from the Commission. After repeated invitations from the Commission Chair asking BHP Billiton to use their allotted time to let the public hear from them were refused, the Commission proceeded with the hearing. On a 12-0 vote, they formally objected to the request for a finding of consistency.

There remains the possibility that BHP Billiton may file an appeal. And Governor Schwarzenegger still has until May 21 to either approve or veto the project.

**Phone the Governor at (916) 445-2841
Ask him to veto Cabrillo Port!**

Ask him to show the public that he is committed in both word and deed to reducing greenhouse gases and cleaning up our air quality, and that he will prove this to the community by his veto of this heavily polluting project.

Will the Rocketdyne/SSFL Finally Become a Superfund Site?

Cleanup of the heavily-contaminated former Rocketdyne rocket engine testing site in the Santa Susana hills has been a frustrating challenge for Federal and State government agencies and community activists for decades. Testing activities, coupled with reckless disposal of both chemical and radioactive waste on the site, have left it dangerously contaminated.



SOURCE: <http://ludb.clui.org/ex/i/CA4970/>

HEALTH RISK BRIEFING HELD

On April 5, State Senator Sheila Kuehl hosted a briefing on health risks to the public on and near the Santa Susana Field Laboratory. I was honored to join her, along with L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and local electeds. We heard riveting testimony from experts on radioactive nuclear waste and exposure pathways, and from area residents who told of serious health problems like cancers in their families that they associate with working at or living near the site. Many of the cancers are very rare, yet have occurred in statistically high concentrations within a wedge-shaped area that eerily matches the path of the prevailing easterly winds that blow off the site. The briefing began with a video produced by The History Channel on the partial nuclear meltdown on the site in 1959. The witches brew of chemicals and radioactive waste that remains on and offsite includes tritium, cesium 137, plutonium 238, dioxins, mercury, perchlorate from dumped rocket fuel, and TCE, but this is by no means exhaustive.

Although Senator Kuehl has introduced bill after bill, year after year, in an effort to force clean up of the site to the highest levels before children would be allowed to move on to the site, all have been killed by heavy lobbying from the Boeing Company, current owners of the site. Boeing is anxious to get cleanup signoff as quickly as possible in order to sell the land for unrestricted use, including residential development.

CLEANUP LEGISLATION AGAIN INTRODUCED

Senator Kuehl has persisted, and this year introduced SB 990, which will again mandate a Superfund-level of cleanup of the site before it could be released for homes. I quickly signed on to the bill as a principal co-author.

In spite of what would seem like an obvious answer, decades of wrangling between the EPA, the Department of Energy, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and other relevant agencies have still not resulted in agreement on how much contamination will be allowed to remain on the site in order for it to be deemed safe for residential use. And there is the issue of who must pay the cost.

EPA WILL REVISIT POSSIBLE SUPERFUND LISTING

Prior to the health briefing, my District Director had requested and scheduled a conference call with the Environmental Protection Agency and Senator Kuehl's District Director to find out what it would take to get the EPA to reverse their earlier decisions that the site did not qualify for Superfund listing. Just a few days after the briefing and its powerful testimony, the call took place. EPA representatives advised that they will now go back and review the entire site for both radioactive and chemical contamination, not just selected areas with limited data as before.

WILL IT REALLY HAPPEN?

Although this would appear to be positive news, it is far too early to celebrate. Boeing has not been forthcoming with essential documents and information over many years, and has been allowed to do much of the site testing themselves, thus with the polluter generating much of the information on which the new assessment will rely. EPA has reversed itself on prior occasions, and there are political forces at work in Washington, D.C. Nevertheless, the Hazard Ranking System Model process will begin immediately.

My office will receive regular briefings from EPA. The timeline is roughly nine months for the EPA to have all the information assessed and to make their decision. We'll see. I'll keep you advised in this newsletter. I dare to hope that the site will finally be listed for funding, so that we can move on to the next and critical question of the level of cleanup that will be demanded of Boeing.

Holocaust Survivor Project

Every year members of the State Assembly have had the opportunity to honor Holocaust survivors in a formal ceremony conducted on the Assembly Floor. It is timed to coincide with California Holocaust Memorial Week, and students participate by doing an interview and written biography of the survivor, all of which are placed in a book as a powerful and permanent historic record of the State of California.

I was very privileged to recognize West L.A. resident Hershel Frankiel this year. Mr. Frankiel lived in Poland as a child and was imprisoned by the Germans with his mother for just one night because a soldier was bribed to release them. In fear of the Nazis, his family hid in the attic of a farmer who agreed to help them. They were moved to the cellar and ultimately to a hole in the ground next to the farmer's barn, where they lived for two years. Meals were passed to them via a tunnel into the barn. Since no daylight penetrated into the hole, young Hershel dug a small shaft in which he angled a mirror. With that reflected light, he learned to read newspapers the farmer provided to his family. In January of 1945, his family finally crawled out of the hole, escaped to Poland, and in 1946 made their way to America.



The stories of our diminishing number of survivors are always stirring, and filled with astonishing courage and resilience. Holocaust Memorial Week is a fitting opportunity to remember the persecution and evil visited on millions of Jews, but also over which these treasured survivors triumphed.

Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation Annual Banquet

I was very honored to be the keynote speaker this month at the Federation's lovely annual banquet. The Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation is made up of roughly 20 homeowner associations in and around the Santa Monica Mountains. Together, they have formed a strong and respected voice on issues related to overdevelopment and inappropriate development of the area, with the intent of preserving the unique character of the area.



I let them know that I share their commitment, and intend to be their partner in Sacramento. I also noted that I requested and received two key committee appointments – the Assembly Natural Resources policy committee and the Natural Resources budget subcommittee. The budget committee will be hands-on with the allocations of the Proposition 84 resource bond funds that were approved by the voters last November, as well as other important funding sources for park and open space projects.

The highlight every year is always the surprise announcement of the Federation's "*Citizen of the Year*." This year it was Jess Thomas, former Federation President, long-time president of the Old Agoura Homeowners Association, and fierce defender of preserving the rural feel of the region. Jess' calm and friendly demeanor belies his youthful escapades as a motorcycle racer, with a land speed record that still holds to this day. Jess is highly-respected and much beloved by all who know him. I was delighted to present him with a resolution of appreciation from the State of California.

Third Annual "Stream to Sea" Family Fun Day

On **Saturday, April 28**, the Mountains Restoration Trust, along with the City of Calabasas and the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District will be sponsoring a wonderful free environmental fair -- activities, music and entertainment, and education on the importance of protecting our natural waterways. Enjoy being up-close with non-releasable wildlife from The Nature of Wildworks, get involved in a live performance, sample the refreshments. And be sure to bring your children.



**Headwaters Corner
in Calabasas
23075 Mulholland Hwy
at Old Topanga Road
Noon to 4:00 p.m.**

Committee and Legislative Appointments

Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #2 on Education

Aging and Long-Term Care

Budget

Budget Subcommittee #3 on Resources

Education

Natural Resources

Joint Legislative Budget Committee

Select Committee on Community Colleges

Legislative Liaison, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

California Commission on the Status of Women

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